

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2509

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10990

TAIPEI PLEASE PASS TO CONSULAR SECTION ON URGENT BASIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: BRITISH SHIP WITH BOAT CASE REFUGEES REFUSED PERMISSION TO
LAND AT KAO-HSIUNG

REF: GONZALEZ-KREUSER TELCONS OF AUGUST 15

1. DEPUTY POLITICAL ADVISOR ORR CONTACTED CONGEN REGARDING
BRITISH OWNED/REGISTERED SHIP AVON FOREST, CHARTERED TO
U.S. COMPANY, WHICH PICKED UP 41 INDOCHINA REFUGEES IN
SOUTH CH AA SEA WHILE PROCEEDING TO KAO-HSIUNG, TAIWAN, NEXT
PORT OF CALL. SHIP IS DUE IN KAOSHING EARLY MORNING AUGUST
16. ORR SAID THAT AFTER KAOSHING, NEXT PORT OF CALL IS
PANAMA (EMBASSY TAIPEI WAS TOLD VANCOUVER) AND IT DOES NOT
HAVE ADEQUATE FACILITIES TO PROCEED ACROSS PACIFIC WITH
REFUGEES ON BOARD.

2. AFTER TELCON WITH AMEMBASSY TAIPEI, WE TOLD ORR THAT EMBASSY
WAS AWARE OF MATTER THROUGH TAIPEI AGENT LIANG OF OCEANIC
TRADING CORP. ACCORDING TO LIANG, IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES
AT KAO-HSIUNG REFUSED PERMISSION FOR REFUGEES TO LAND AND
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SHIP HAD OR WAS ABOUT TO DIVERT TO HONG KONG ON INSTRUCTIONS
OF OWNERS IN ATTEMPT TO LAND THEM HERE. SHIP WOULD THEN
RETURN TO KAO-HSIUNG TO DISCHARGE OR PICK UP CARGO.

3. HONG KONG GOVT WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
WOULD APPROACH TAIWAN AUTHORITIES ON THIS MATTER, BUT
WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF EMBASSY WOULD AVOID STATING DIRECTLY

APPROACH IS MADE ON BEHALF HKG. SINCE SHIP SOUTH OF TAIWAN, IT COULD STILL PROCEED TO KAO-HSIUNG IF MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD INTERCEDE TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO BE LANDED. IF APPROPRIATE, EMBASSY COULD MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) AS MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, SHIPS WITH BOAT REFUGEES ON BOARD SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LAND THEM AT NEXT SCHEDULED PORT OF CALL. IF SHIPS ARE REFUSED SUCH PERMISSION, THEY WILL CEASE PICKING UP REFUGEES AT SEA CAUSING HARDSHIP AND POSSIBLY DEATH TO THOSE ESCAPING VIETNAM BY BOAT; (B) TWO TAIWAN TRAWLERS ARRIVED HONG KONG ON JULY 4 WITH TOTAL OF 135 REFUGEES AND ONE TAIWAN TRAWLER ON JULY 9 WITH 339 REFUGEES ON BOARD. FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS HONG KONG GOVT ALLOWED THESE REFUGEES TO BE LANDED. HOWEVER, SHOULD TAIWAN REFUSE BRITISH SHIP PERMISSION TO LAND THESE 41 REFUGEES, HONG KONG GOVT WILL REEXAMINE ITS ATTITUDE AND TAKE HARD LOOK AT ANY FUTURE REFUGEE ARRIVALS ON TAIWAN SHIPS. HONG KONG GOVT EXPECTS THESE 41 REFUGEES TO BE LANDED IN TAIWAN; (C) CONGEN UNDERSTANDS THAT AGENTS HERE, EAST-WEST SHIPPING AGENCY, HAS BEEN TOLD THAT SHIP SHOULD NOT DIVERT TO HONG KONG BUT SHOULD PROCEED AS SCHEDULED TO KAO-HSIUNG SINCE THERE ARE STRONG GROUNDS FOR REFUGEES TO BE LANDED THERE, THAT IS, POINTS (A) AND ESPECIALLY (B) ABOVE, AND NO GROUNDS FOR THEM TO BE LANDED IN HONG KONG. POLICY OF HKG IS TO ACCEPT REFUGEES ARRIVING ON OWN JUNKS OR ON VESSELS FOR WHICH HONG KONG IS NEXT SCHEDULED
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PORT OF CALL.

4. FYI. IF MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS PREPARED REVERSE NEGATIVE DECISION BY KAO-HSIUNG IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES BUT NEEDS GUARANTEE THAT THESE REFUGEES WILL BE RESETTLED ELSEWHERE, HONG KONG GOVT WILL REQUEST THREE MONTH UK GUARANTEE FROM LONDON ON URGENT BASIS. IF GUARANTEE IS AUTHORIZED AND THESE REFUGEES COULD NOT BE RESETTLED ELSEWHERE, ICEM HONG KONG WOULD BE ASKED MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO TRANSPORT THEM TO UK AFTER EXPIRATION THREE MONTHS. END FYI.
SHOESMITH

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